

Montfort_EurHope20: Leadership for the Mission

FATIMA, Portugal - *Fr. Carlos VIEIRA (40), the recently appointed superior of the community of Fatima, shares about his experience of "aggiornamento" on the topic of leadership.*

What are you studying?

I am taking up a post graduate degree in social science. The purpose of this study is to deepen and develop my management skills and offer directives to leaders who have a social intervention to do with innovation in this sector.

Why did you start studying again?

I have always looked at studying as a means of enrichment. Since my initial formation, I experienced studying as a means of sanctification, of self-knowledge. So, struck by the challenge in a world that changes every day, I felt the desire to deepen the social organization and functioning of society.



Why did you choose this discipline?

We have *Caritas* in the parish and we work together with the municipality to give an answer to the needy and to all those who seek us. Brought by this motivation and by the work we do with other organizations, they spoke to me about this study. I was informed on the university's website, and the presentation of this course has given me great interest. I saw that it has a connection with the work of *Caritas* and then I realized that I could also use the course content to manage the community and many things in life.

In light of the things that you have learned, what could you suggest to our formators to develop the leaders among our candidates in initial formation?

The secret for Formators to develop the spirit of leadership in the young generation is, first of all, a sort of "*falling in love*", then letting them dream and finally, getting them into an integral formation in all aspects, that is, human, spiritual, social and intellectual. But the foundation of everything is Jesus, the true leader and teacher. The passion for the Church and for the Congregation should also be remembered. A person who is in love and a dreamer brings the fire that Montfort describes in the Prayer for Missionaries.

How could you combine studying with pastoral commitments?

It was easy to combine, not only studying and pastoral life but also community life, because the course is just twice a week, that is, on Friday evening and Saturday morning or sometimes, the whole day of Saturday. So, I still manage to do apostolate during the week such as funerals, Masses, Confessions, visits to the sick and meetings with different groups.

Have you been supported by the confreres?

When there was a need to replace me for Mass or other activities, the confreres helped me and were always available. They also encouraged me to go on with the studies.

Which "*philosophie de la gestion*" emerges from these studies?

First of all, the society, the people and the organizational structures are changing rapidly. For this reason, they need the necessary tools to help us read the times and understand how our organizations must adapt to give a structured response to these great challenges. Having a "*philosophie de la gestion*" today allows me to make strategic planning and management and then make a more careful formulation of the programs and projects of the parish and the community. However, it is necessary to start with an analysis, both of the organization and the environment where we are and then make strategic choices.

You are recently appointed as a superior of a religious community. What does the study bring to your assignment?

This study is helping me to understand that we need to dream because dreams keep us alive and with hope. In other words, we must have a vision and this makes me understand three things: 1) Where we are as a community, that is, what our mission is, the areas of activity, through a deeper analysis of our presence here in Fatima. What path can we offer to the people of God with our spirituality? This helps me to better understand how we are organized in this sense; 2) Where do we want to go, what is our goal? This is why we must have conceivable objectives and strategies; 3) What to do to achieve this goal? Concrete strategies must be made. For example, the new name that we have given to our community in Fatima, "*Casa Montfort*" means a new mission for the home, an annual program, with activities for the community and for the laity. So, this study led me to look at the community in a new perspective.

Then, there is a phrase by Philip KOTLER that always struck me during this study, who said: "*There are three types of organization: one that makes things happen, the other that sees things happen and the third that asks: what happened?*" Aware of this, Fr. Luis Oliveira and I, both responsible for the community of Fatima, agree that we must make things happen in the community. In this sense, the study helps to put into practice the P.D.C.A. method (Plan, Do, Check, Act). Then, it helps a lot in the way of becoming a leader, making me develop the art of communicating with the confreres and above all, of motivating the community.

To whom would you recommend this study and why?

I would recommend this study to a parish priest, to a superior of an entity, to a superior of the local community and also to a bursar. With this study, you learn how social organization works, how to manage, how to become a leader, offers techniques to communicate, how to manage and resolve conflicts, helps to become innovative and project creators and most importantly, in the end, it helps a lot in thinking of financial sustainability.

What do you think is the biggest challenge of a leader? And how to deal with it?

I think that the challenges of a leader are different: managing in diversity, being an efficient and effective person, being an animator, motivating his team or community. Each of these challenges must be addressed through listening and dialogue.

What connection do you find between the subjects studied and the Montfortian charism?

Looking at the life of our Founder, it is immediately clear that he was a man concerned with the social problems of his time. It is enough to remember his love for the poor, for the sick and for the least of his time. He was a man with the sensitivity to understand the signs of his time. We know that the world has changed since the time of the Founder; social structures have evolved; new problems have arisen in different fields. The poor are always there, both the traditional and the new ones. The poor, materially, intellectually, especially morally and spiritually, lives in the cities and in the countryside. In different realities where we are, we try to respond to the deepest needs of men. The study gave me the sensitivity to create structures that respond to these needs.

Fr. Marco Pasinato, SMM